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FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

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SUBJECT: USUNESCO: US, ISRAEL AND 10 OTHERS ELECTED TO  
THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

1. Summary. The United States was elected on the first round October 10 to the 21-nation World Heritage Committee ("Committee"), which decides policy matters concerning the 189-Member World Heritage Convention of 1973, such as selection of sites for UNESCO's World Heritage List. Israel also was elected to one of the 12 vacant seats on the first round. End summary.

2. The World Heritage List now comprises 812 sites, including the Statute of Liberty, the Grand Canyon, Mont St. Michel in France, the Mostar Old Bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bamiyan, Afghanistan site of the destroyed giant Buddas. (The web site (<http://whc.unesco.org/>) allows easy access to country and site information.) Inscription of a site on UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage List often brings out strong national feelings and is often seen as a sure way to enhance tourist revenues.

3. There are no plans to seek US additions to our 20 World Heritage sites. This was a strong point for the USG candidacy, as there is a feeling that some countries run for the Committee with an eye towards advocating on the Committee for the inscription of additional sites in their country on the World Heritage List.

4. Mauritius was elected in a preliminary round, which is reserved for candidates with no sites on the World Heritage List. In addition to the US and Israel, Canada, Madagascar, Morocco, South Korea, Spain and Tunisia were elected. Cuba, Peru and Kenya were elected in a second round, completing the list of 12 new members on the Committee.

5. The 21 nations who now sit on the Committee are:

Benin, Canada, Chile, Cuba, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Republic of Korea, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Spain, Tunisia, and the United States of America.

6. The elections took place in Paris at the biennial meeting of the General Assembly of the Convention, to which the 189 members who are signatories to the convention are invited. (Note. By tradition, these elections are held during the biennial UNESCO General Conference. End note.)

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